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PARTY ORGAN DISCUSSES  
IMPORTANCE OF RUMANIAN LOCAL ELECTIONS

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Bucharest, Nov 1953

On 20 December 1953, the citizens of the Rumanian People's Republic will go to the polls to elect representatives to the people's councils. The People's Democratic Front (Frontul Democratiei Populare), representing millions of urban and rural workers, intellectuals, artisans, and housewives, personifies the unshakable unity of the workers with the Rumanian Workers Party, the faithful and tireless leader in the struggle to ensure a happier life for all working people. Free and masters of their own fate, the workers have participated enthusiastically in preparations for the elections, which will lead to the strengthening of the local organs of state power and to the strengthening of the democratic state.

Role of People's Councils

The people's democratic state, whose strength comes from its unbreakable ties with the working people, is interested in the unceasing development of the political and general activity of the masses. Only through an ever greater and better informed participation of the masses in the leadership of the state can the tasks outlined by the party for the development of the national economy and the early improvement of the people's standard of living be successfully achieved. The realization that every decision and step taken by the party and the people's democratic state is inspired solely by solicitude for the happiness and well-being of the people explains the enthusiasm and sense of responsibility with which the masses participate in the electoral campaign, which has become a veritable school of civic and political education. Participation in the preparations for the election of deputies to the people's councils has strengthened the workers' consciousness that they are the real masters of their free fatherland, and that only through their enthusiastic labors and increased efforts will the shortcomings which still impede the country's progress be corrected and new successes be achieved on the road to the continuous and rapid improvement of the workers' standard of living.

The people's councils represent one of the most valuable gains of our people. They are basically different from the old prefectures, and communal and district councils (prefecturi, primarii si preturi), which were staffed with parasites and executioners of the working people, shameless plunderers of the nation's wealth. Under the bourgeois landlord regime, prefects were not elected but were directly appointed by the Ministry of the Interior from among the large landowners and industrialists, from among the most pliant tools of the politicians in power, and from specialists in repression and shady deals. The administrative law of 1936 provided that a man had to have a master's or doctor's degree or the rank of general or field-grade officer to be a prefect. A praetor or notary, also appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, had to have a degree in law or commerce, besides fulfilling other conditions. A factory worker or peasant would never have headed a prefecture or district.

The communal councils, the so-called assistants of the mayors, were frequently replaced by interim commissions composed of kulaks in villages or wealthy merchants in cities. The power of decision in all local problems was in the hands of the prefect, the local chief of police, and the tax collector, who were all government appointees. The former organs of local administration, intended to serve the interests of the clique in power, ensured the merciless exploitation of workers and peasants who dared to demand their most elementary rights. The

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masses suffered from innumerable shortages and deficiencies. Villages and cities remained in deepest misery while prefects, mayors, and district and communal councilors embezzled public funds to build up reserves against the lean times when there would be no more governmental bones to pick. The former state organs of local administration were hostile to the working masses and inspired nothing but deep and justified hatred.

The people's democratic state, on the other hand, is characterized by its democracy.

The people's councils constitute the political basis of the Rumanian People's Republic. This means that the rural and city workers, to whom all power belongs, exercise their state powers through the agency of the people's councils. They are the new form of political organization which corresponds to the new political theory of the Rumanian state. The people's councils are the broadest mass political organizations, encompassing all working people under the guidance of the working class; they constitute a mass political structure which no bourgeois country has or can have. Article 4 of the Rumanian Constitution states that "in the Rumanian People's Republic, power belongs to the city and village workers, who exercise it through the Grand National Assembly and the people's councils."

The people's councils, in their capacity of local organs of state power, translate into practice the policies of the state. It is within their framework that the alliance of the working class with the working peasantry is being cemented; it is through them that the leadership of the working class, allied with the peasant class for the attainment of the complete victory of socialism, is ensured. This leading role of the working class is in perfect harmony with the interests of the working peasants, for it ensures a rigid orientation toward the building of democracy.

#### Duties of People's Councils

The people's councils defend the small and middle peasants against kulak exploitation. They mobilize the working peasants to fight against exploiters and speculators and the sabotage of kulak elements and against the attempts of these enemies to violate the laws of the state and to avoid the fulfillment of their food delivery and other obligations to the state. The people's councils must fight against any distortion of the party line or any abuses or violations of the people's legal rights.

The people's councils also have economic and cultural functions. They manage local industry, agriculture, commerce, food supply, public education, health institutions, etc., thus contributing to the progress of the regions, raions, and cities, and to the raising of the living standards of the masses. At the same time, they ensure law enforcement and the application of laws in the class spirit in which they were conceived.

The people's councils represent a mass organization which, by its entire structure, offers the maximum facilities to attract millions of workers to the building of socialism and to the running of the nation's affairs. Hundreds of thousands of working people, men and women of all ages and professions, work in permanent commissions and in assemblies of delegates. By participating in the activities launched by the people's councils, they learn by practice how to run the state.

The people's councils include working people of different races and thus contribute to the strengthening of the brotherly ties between the Rumanian people and the national minorities.

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The people's councils are guided by the party, which ensures correct orientation in the solution of the most complicated problems in the building of socialism; they facilitate the liaison between the vanguard of the working people and the great masses of those who work, and thus contribute to the unbreakable unity between government, party, and people.

Democratic centralism is the organizational principle on which the activity of the people's council is founded. True to this principle, the deputies of the local organs of state power are elected by the working people, to whom they are answerable for the fulfillment of the tasks entrusted to them. They can be taken to task and even dismissed if they do not prove to be tireless servants of the people's interests. The unhesitating execution of orders of higher organs is, in accordance with the same principle, mandatory for every people's council. This does not exclude the broadest initiative of local organs in the solution of state problems. The principle of democratic centralism combines central direction from above with the creative initiative of the masses.

During the few years of their existence, the people's councils have been active in all fields of the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. Thousands of schools, dispensaries, cultural institutions, etc., have been built, innumerable local resources have been discovered and developed, enterprises producing consumer goods have been created, and numerous public works have been constructed.

#### Future Program of People's Councils

However, the activities of the people's councils, particularly in the economic field, have not kept pace with the growing needs of socialist industrial development and the demands of the working people. The economic program initiated by the plenum of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party in August 1953 demands the maximum mobilization of all local forces and resources, the development of local industry producing consumer goods, an increase in the output of state, collective, and individual farms, the development of animal husbandry, the creation of strong local food supply sources, improvement in the operation of state and cooperative commercial units, etc. J. V. Stalin teaches us that "unless we unshackle the forces which exist in the provinces, in the field of economic construction, unless we support local industry with every means, beginning with raions and districts, unless we unshackle all these forces, we will be unable to attain that general progress in economic construction of which Lenin spoke." The people's councils must become real organizers of the local economies. They must enlist ever increasing numbers of working people and, with the help of deputies and technicians, must prepare a vast program to discover and develop natural resources. The constant goal must be the satisfactory operation of enterprises of local interest, increased production, improved quality and increased variety to satisfy the demands of the workers. The Targu Mures people's council has closely followed the operation of units of the Lazar Odon local enterprises, which process many local resources and are sending to market increasing quantities of needed consumer goods. Much of these goods can be produced in satisfactory quantities by local industries, if the people's councils guide and supervise them carefully. So far, their assistance to individual artisans and those in cooperatives, to enable them to contribute adequately to the production of consumer goods, has been unsatisfactory. They must supply them with raw materials, must take an interest in their needs, and must help to create cooperative and private shops to satisfy the growing demands of the working people.

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The creation by each raion and regiune of its own sources of food supplies is one of the chief tasks of the people's councils, a task which cannot be postponed. The food supply of the working people is a political problem of the greatest importance. Throughout the country, hog-raising and hog-fattening installations, dairy farms, fish ponds, truck gardens, etc., can be started. These offer unlimited possibilities to improve the food supply of the working people. It is necessary to fight the mentality of some of the executive committees of people's councils which consider these supply problems to be the exclusive job of the central organs, and are therefore content to wait for the planned food quotas to be sent them from the central state stores. The party and the government demand greater food supplies from the local organs of state power and demand that these organs should stop the bureaucratic practice of expecting everything ready-made from the center.

One of the party's main tasks is to overcome the agricultural lag in order to improve the supply of food to workers and of raw materials to industry. The planned increase in state aid to collective farms, to TOZ (cooperative farms), and to individual small and medium farms will develop the country's agricultural potential, and thus will raise production per hectare of all crops and will develop livestock raising and other branches of agriculture. Similarly, steps taken by the government to increase the working peasant's share of the harvest cannot fail to increase production, to increase the incomes of small and medium peasants, and to augment the government's food stocks, thus permitting greater deliveries to the people and to industry.

The most significant tasks set by the government for the agricultural workers are first to attain and then to surpass the prewar level of production, and to increase plant and animal yields. The people's councils have a great part to play in the accomplishment of these tasks. They must see that party and government decrees are correctly applied. However, some people's councils (in the Galati and Iasi regiunes, for instance) have been lax in this important matter. They have not guided agriculture sufficiently or required agronomists and livestock specialists to give the peasants technical help. The people's councils must constantly give practical help and guidance. They must intensify aid to collectives and TOZ and see that state farms and MES fulfill the tasks assigned to them by the plenum, in order to strengthen the economy and the organization of collectives and TOZ.

The people's councils have paid too little attention to the exchange between town and village and to the operation of state and cooperative commercial units. Contrary to the directives of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party, some people's councils have brought about the liquidation of private trade and thus hurt the exchange between town and village and the food supply of the urban population. Many of the councils have not supervised collecting agencies, cooperatives, or Aprozar (Procurement and Supply Units), and have tolerated the bureaucratic practices of many of their agents.

People's councils must take a close interest in the observance of procurement and delivery contracts by Aprozar and cooperative stores, and also in the supply of industrial products to village cooperatives. The people's councils must also make it possible for peasants to bring their excess production to urban markets. They must see that all legal regulations are strictly observed. They must explain to peasants that fulfillment of their obligations on schedule contributes to the increase in consumer goods production and consequently increases their own share in these industrial goods and strengthens the people's democracy.

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The people's councils also have numerous duties to perform in the social and cultural and the public utilities fields. They can contribute increasingly to the development of town and village by starting construction of new schools, cultural homes, dispensaries, and hospitals, repair of roads and streets, electrification of villages, etc., through self-taxation and other means. The people's councils must, in the fulfillment of their cultural and educational duties, pay more attention than heretofore to the content of cultural teaching and work. The main task is to ensure correct orientation, that is, concentration on the great tasks imposed by the building of socialism and the carrying out of party and government policy.

The complex problems entrusted to the people's councils can be satisfactorily solved only if an ever growing number of working people take part in the activities of the local organs of state power. A characteristic of people's democracies is the fact that they depend on the broad masses of working people for support and attract them toward permanent participation in public affairs. The recent plenum of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party specially stressed that solid ties with the masses are essential for the constant strengthening of the state, for a high standard of living, and for the defense of peace.

However, some people's councils fail to maintain close ties with the people or to attract them to participation in productive work. They work in a narrowly sectarian spirit only with members of the executive committees and the employees of the sections. The various organizations devised to attract citizens and deputies to the work of the people's councils, such as permanent committees, citizens' commissions, etc., are ignored by some activists in responsible positions. Many councils do not activate the women's councils or the assemblies of women delegates. This negligence makes simple administrative agencies out of some people's councils.

One of the chief causes for deficiencies in some people's councils is bureaucratism, the dangerous enemy of the socialist state. The attitude of some of the activists, who never find time to listen to workers' complaints or who endlessly postpone the solution of justified demands, must be resolutely combated. Some executive committees take no effective steps to remedy situations of which they are fully aware. This was the case, for instance, in the Trusesti and Dorohoi raions of Suceava Regiune. Bureaucratism helps the enemy to indulge in his counterrevolutionary activities and to sap the foundations of the people's power. People's councils must eradicate such tendencies; they must stimulate criticism from below and strictly enforce respect for the people's law.

The supreme law of the people's councils must be to consolidate their ties with the masses. These ties may be strengthened in innumerable ways: permanent commissions can be given daily guidance; a broad active of workers, peasants, engineers, agronomists, doctors, etc. can be attracted; consultations between deputies and voters can be organized; the meetings of the people's councils can be properly conducted; reports can be made by executive committees to the masses; criticism from below can be stimulated; etc. Recently elected people's councils must devote to the problems raised by voters at meetings with candidates.

The election campaign now in full swing is an excellent opportunity for the people's councils to step up their activities and to attract the greatest possible numbers to participate in local government. The elections will be held on the basis of a decree of the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly, which is a perfect illustration of our electoral system's democratic spirit. Each chapter and article of that decree provides the most perfect conditions for the full exercise of political rights guaranteed to citizens by the constitution. The decree provides for the election of one deputy per electoral district for all people's councils, including communal councils. Under the present system, workers enjoy not only the right to elect and to be elected, but also

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the right to take part in the organization of elections and to check on the way they are run within the framework of the electoral commissions. Over 500,000 workers have taken an active part in the proceedings. Such a thing would be impossible in a capitalist country.

At their meetings, the citizens of Rumania have selected as candidates of the People's Democratic Front sons of the working people, honest, devoted, able, of various ages and trades. They have carefully weighed whether the past and present activities of a candidate offer a guarantee of honest performance of the duties which would fall upon him. The meetings themselves have offered a welcome opportunity for a thorough analysis of the activities of the people's councils over the last 3 years. The participants have underlined the successes achieved on the local level by the people's councils and have emphasized that such achievements would have been quite impossible under the bourgeois regime. But at the same time, they have criticized the passiveness of some of the people's councilors in solving economic problems, and have formulated a number of suggestions and proposals. Meetings between candidates and voters and meetings for the submission of suggestions have forged, in advance of the elections, a solid bond between the future city and village managers and their constituents, thus laying the foundation for their collaboration.

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